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Suspect's CIA Ties Stymie \$8-Million Car Theft Case

SAN DIEGO (AP)—U.S. Atty. William Kennedy was quoted Friday as saying that he has not been able to prosecute a former Mexican official in an \$8-million stolen car case because the man is considered the CIA's "most important source in Mexico and Central America."

Kennedy said that Miguel Nassar Haro, who headed Mexico's Federal Security Agency until January, has been implicated by U.S. investigators in a ring that has stolen \$8.4 million in cars in San Diego and Orange counties and smuggled them into Mexico.

In an interview published Friday in the San Diego Union, Kennedy said prosecution of Nassar was recommended last November, but the Justice Department has not decided the matter yet because of concerns expressed by the CIA and the FBI's legal attache in Mexico City, Gordon McGinley.

The paper said McGinley and a CIA agent identified only as Max were at a meeting in Mexico City last July 25 where Nassar was described as "absolutely indispensable." U.S. Embassy and Justice De-

partment officials were told that "If we lost him, it would be a disaster."

"We repeatedly have voiced the view that prosecution must proceed," Kennedy said. "No one has said these indictments cannot be returned, but it is still a matter of concern and debate in Washington."

The Union said it learned that the CIA lost interest in Nassar after he left his security directorship in Mexico, and the agency said it is not responsible for delaying his prosecution.

The paper said U.S. Ambassador John Gavin has attended top-level meetings in Mexico City and Washington to discuss possible prosecution of Nassar, whose whereabouts are unknown.

After a 10-month investigation by the FBI and the California Highway Patrol, a federal grand jury here returned 28 sealed indictments last year in the stolen-car ring.

On July 14 and 15, teams of agents arrested 14 people in the case, including two agents of the Mexican security agency Nassar headed. The U.S. attorney's office said two of them have implicated Nassar.